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Fortiter, Fideliter, forsan Feliciter...

AURICLE

No. 14 - Monday, February 9th, 1976 - A U of T Medical Society Publication

MERCURY POLLUTION

On February 13th, an art show is going to open at the Art Gallery of Ontario. This exhibition does not have a medical theme nor do the artists have any connections with medicine; however, it should still be of interest to medical students.

The title of the show is Changing Visions - The Canadian Landscape, and the sponsor is Reed Paper Limited. Reed Paper is the parent firm of the Dryden Chemical Company. Dryden Chemical is the company that has been dumping mercury-laden wastes into the English-Wabigoon River systems in Northwestern Ontario since 1962...

In Minamata, Japan over 100 people have died from eating mercury-contaminated fish, and another 700 have been permanently crippled. It took the people of Minamata over twelve years of fighting to get the Ninon Chisso company to admit responsibility for the poisoning and to provide compensation for the damage done. In Northwestern Ontario, the levels of mercury in fish from the English-Wabigoon Rivers are as high or higher than the levels found in the fish in Japan. The Indians who live in the area have been examined, and the early signs of mercury poisoning have been found in a large percentage of those tested; and it is possible that the deaths of two people have been the result of mercury toxicity.

It is not only the physical health of the Indians that has been affected, but also their economic and psychological health. The economic base of the Indian communities had depended upon commercial fishing and upon guiding at the local tourist lodges. This has been destroyed, forcing large numbers of Indians to go on welfare. Dr. Peter Newberry, a physician paid by the National Indian Brotherhood and the (Quaker) Society of Friends, has described the reserves as socially shattered. The Indians have been trying since 1970 to have something done about the situation. It took over four years to get the provincial government to provide the Indians with another source of protein. Reed Paper has yet to provide any compensation. In fact, Reed now plans to build the largest forestry complex in Ontario. This project threatens to damage thousands of square miles of northern forest.

It is a cruel irony that Reed, the sponsor of the show, is one of the "good corporate citizens" primarily responsible for the changing vision of the Canadian landscape. This art show is an attempt by the company to get us to believe in their corporate goodwill and sense of social responsibility. A group of people who objected to the activities of Reed have formed the Anti-Reed Campaign to plan a demonstration, not against the art show, but against Reed's sponsorship of the show. We are also demanding that Reed take responsibility for the damages which it has caused by its use of mercury.

We will be gathering Friday the 13th at 7:30 at Grange Park (south of the Art Gallery on Beverly Street) to prepare for a peaceful demonstration against Reed, and we plan to leaflet the exhibition every Saturday & Sunday until the exhibit closes on March 21st.

If you would like to become involved, or if you'd like more information about mercury pollution, you can call Linda Rosenbaum at 366-5061 (evenings) or Heather Ross at 368-0880.

- Joel Lexchin Meds III

The Medical Society presents "The Annual Meds Formal" on February 21st: 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. at Ontario Place.

with Tommy Earlls & The All-Stars, plus a 'rock' band ...

Tickets ($8.00) & maps are available from the Chief Clerks, and in the Medical Society Office. See you there!

MEDS FORMAL

This week, the entire medical student body will be given a questionaire concerning the importance of nutrition education in the medical curriculum. This is your opportunity to express your views on this issue. The result of this study will be made available to the Faculty of Medicine Curriculum Renewal Planning Task Force, and may be useful in planning future medical curricula.

If you care about the content of your curriculum, please participate and fill out the questionnaire when you receive it.

Gail Douglas & Gail McQueen

"She wants to know if she could feed her husband chicken soup intravenously."

The Medical Alumni Association is sponsoring an informal meeting on "Health and the Law":

Tuesday, February 10th 8 pm

Alumni Common Room

Mr. Theodor Kerzner, a lawyer practising with the Macauley-Perry firm will be speaking on what the Medical Review Ctte means to the practicing physician, and how you can run into trouble with this committee

Discussion & Coffee to follow the meeting

REFLECTIONS by Ron Cyr

Suicides occur most frequently in the spring. This fact came as a surprise to me. I was aware that suicide is more frequent among single than among married people, more common in urban than in rural areas, more prevalent in time of peace than in time of war... yet, somehow, I felt I could understand: the loneliness, the alienation, the boredom... but, how do you explain why someone would kill himself in the spring?

To most of us, "springtime" connotes a host of pleasant associations: sunny days, blossoms, birds - a veritable rebirth of nature after the death of winter. Our literature abounds with such metaphors and we have not escaped its influence:

> "Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king;
> Then blooms each thing..." (1)

> "The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
> The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
> Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead season's bier.."(2)

Against this background, then, it is not surprising that we are at a loss to account for the observed cycle of self-destruction, with its peak in May, and its annual low in November... (continued next week)

(1) Thomas Nashe (1567-1602) "Spring, the Sweet Spring"

(2) Percy Byssche Shelley (1792-1822) "Adonais"

MASADA needs you !

During its seventh year of publication, this magazine has had its funding abruptly cut off... Private donations are now its only hope, and you can help -

Contact: Norman Doidge,
Box 160, Station Z,
Toronto M5N 2Z4

" Keep the Promise "

Last spring the Medical Assembly discussed the adoption of a Third World orphan by this Faculty. The Assembly tabled the motion, but is willing to resume consideration if there is student support.

The Medical Society can afford it - the question is really: How much do we care about the world's needy children? Show your concern by signing the petition outside 2141.

Translation of quote on Pg. 1 : Earnestly, Faithfully, perhaps Successfully